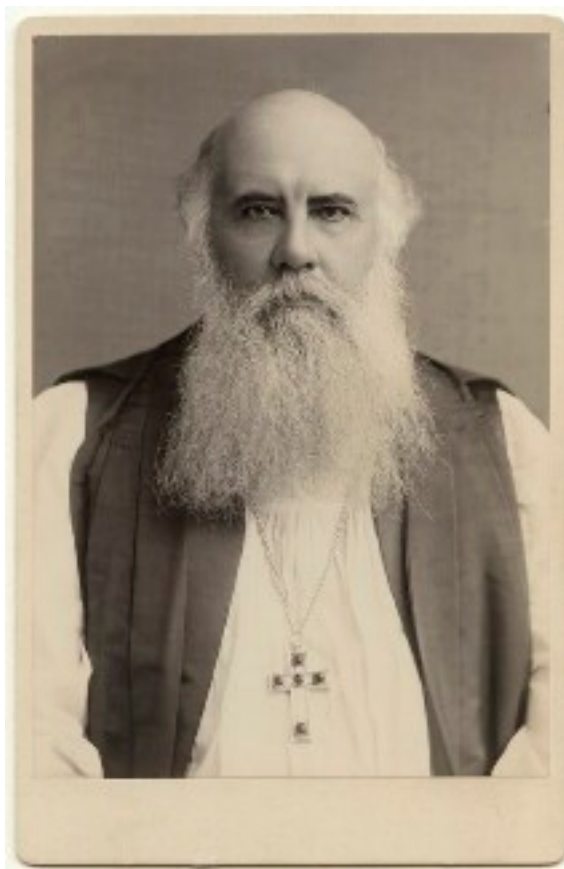


A PEEK THROUGH THE WINDOW - NO. 17

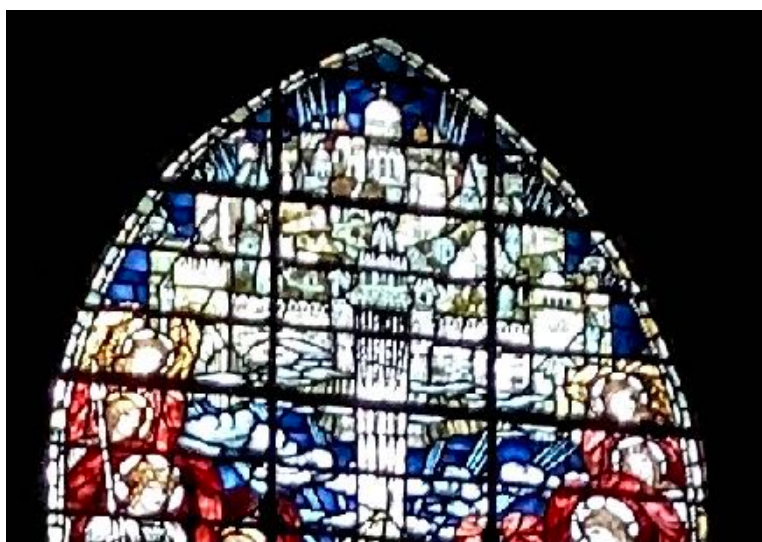
MIKE DEEMING WRITES:

One reason for convening the first Lambeth Conference was the Colenso controversy. John Colenso had been appointed Bishop of Natal in 1853 where he sought to convert the Zulu tribal leaders. Questions that they posed led him to doubt the literal truth of some Biblical doctrine, and this led ultimately to his being convicted of heresy and ex-communicated by Bishop Robert Gray of Cape Town. However, he was able to appeal to the Privy Council in London which held that because the Crown was powerless to appoint a bishop in a colony that possessed its own independent legislature, the royal courts could not uphold the legality of Gray's authority. Colenso was re-instated, but another bishop was appointed alongside him! The Lambeth Conference was thus first convened in 1867 to try to sort out this mess - the conflict of authority between the CofE in England and the Anglican community overseas.

Into this quagmire in 1870 strode the spritely 30- year-old figure of the Rev Allan Becher Webb (he liked to be known as Alan Webb *sic*) as Bishop of Bloemfontein (right), fresh from the rectory at Avon Dassett, Warwickshire. He too was appointed by Gray, so was consecrated by the Anglican community in Scotland where the CofE had no legal authority. In Bloemfontein he worked tirelessly to bridge the gaps in the community, amongst other things founding a nursing order of sisters. In 1883, he was promoted unanimously to the position of Bishop of Grahamstown, where he established an 'era of pacification', succeeding in re-uniting the factions of the St George's cathedral and the pro-cathedral of St Michael. The New Cathedral of St Michael and St George was commenced in 1890 to initial designs by Sir George Gilbert Scott and has the tallest spire in South Africa! In 1901 he was appointed Dean of Salisbury Cathedral and he died here in 1907. Meanwhile



Colenso continued to work with the Zulu community and, indeed, produced the first Zulu translation of the Bible.



The glorious group of windows which face you as you enter the morning chapel, representing the 'Heavenly Jerusalem', are dedicated to Dean Webb. These 1908 windows are an astonishing tour-de-force of J W Brown, one of the 'Aesthetic' movement of stained glass artists. He worked at Powells of Whitefriars at the turn of the century, having been recruited there by Henry Holiday. The three main lancets

closely follow the description of the 'Heavenly Jerusalem' in the Book of Revelation. The central figure of Christ is surrounded by archangels with, below, angels offering incense. Angels either side carry a scroll with the words from Revelation :- 'I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore'. Below the figure of Christ, stands a fountain from which issue the streams of the 'Water of Life' flowing across the side lights through the 'Garden of Paradise'. In the garden, are saints, kings, queens, bishops, priests, warriors, women and little children, with the figures becoming less stylised and more lifelike as you move from Heaven to the Earthly world below. Over a hundred figures are displayed in these three lights. At the very top, the four-square city of Jerusalem, filled with the world's most beautiful buildings, be they cathedrals, temples or mosques.

Above this in the triforium, yet more seraphs, with a rainbow to unite the lights below; and above that, in the clerestory, the images of angels are tightly grouped to appear like the Cathedral's medieval grisaille. As if that weren't enough, a few years later, all eighteen clerestory windows to the east and west of the chapel were similarly glazed, barely visible from the floor. The windows thus reflect Webb's striving for peace and recognition of our shared humanity, which he championed throughout the Zulu and Boer conflicts in his time in South Africa.

In a final touch, at the foot of the centre lancet, a bishop kneels in the Garden of Paradise with a young girl close by – sadly, Webb's only daughter, Henrietta, died in infancy.

